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Farm Broadcasters Letter

Letter No. 2311

May 7, 1987

HOPE FOR TRADE WITH JAPAN

The U.S. trade deficit with Japan in 1986 was \$58 billion. Despite this high trade surplus, the Japanese have import restrictions on many food and agriculture products. Upon return from trade talks in Tokyo, Secretary Richard Lyng and U.S. Trade Representative Clayton Yeutter held a telephone press conference, in which Lyng expressed renewed optimism for improved trade with Japan. Said Lyng, "They would like to have our products, our prices are right, I think gradually they will open their markets." As for pressure being applied on Japan, Yeutter said, "Certainly Secretary Lyng and I put a lot of pressure on them while we were in Tokyo and we hope that pressure will pay dividends a few months down the road."

SOVIET SPRING PLANTINGS

Soviet spring plantings were carried out on 15 million 800 thousand hectares (over 39 million acres) as of April 27, reports the Soviet paper, *Isvestiya*. According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture, spring is late in European USSR, shown by comparing this year's progress with that of previous years. In 1986, by the end of April, 41 million 500 thousand hectares (102½ million acres) were seeded... In 1985, 32 million 600 thousand (80½ million acres)... In 1984, 47 million 900 thousand (over 118 million acres), and in 1983, 48 million 400 thousand (119½ million acres).

ROMANIAN CORN EXPORTS

Reports from Romania indicate that corn exports are expected to fall as a result of stock building this marketing year, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Romania exported an average of about 1 million tons of corn per year over the past six years, with most going to the USSR. Lower exportable supplies from Romania could mean increased export opportunities for the United States.

POSITIVE RETURNS ON LIVESTOCK & POULTRY

Livestock and poultry producers are expected to have positive returns in 1987, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Large supplies of grain, protein meal and forage should moderate production costs. However, the fifth consecutive year of record-large total meat supplies probably will keep poultry and pork prices at or below last year's average. Reduced beef supplies should firm or improve prices received by many cattle producers in 1987.

HOGS & PIGS
OUTLOOK

The March Hogs and Pigs report of the U.S. Department of Agriculture indicated that producers are expanding their breeding inventories. Pork probably will show a 1 to 3 percent year-to-year decline during the first half, with second-half production expanding 7 to 9 percent. For all of 1987, commercial pork production is expected to rise 3 percent. Barrow and gilt prices at the seven major markets may average \$46 to \$50 per hundred-weight for the year, compared with \$51 in 1986.

CATTLE PRICES
OUTLOOK

Fed cattle prices rallied into the low \$70's per hundred-weight in April as supplies tightened, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. Second-quarter beef production could be down a tenth. Nonfed cattle slaughter is expected to decline more sharply than fed cattle slaughter. Beef production is expected to be down 5 to 7 percent in 1987. Large supplies of competing meats will place downward pressure on fed beef prices. Choice steer prices are projected in the low to mid \$60's for the last half of the year.

TEST FOR
LIVESTOCK
DISEASE

A new test has been developed by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to detect heartwater, a livestock blood disease that could threaten U.S. livestock if it enters this country. This experimental test is the first practical blood test for heartwater and is a step toward an effective vaccine. It has been used to check livestock in the Caribbean area for heartwater.

TERMINATED
COWS

An estimated 6,400 head of dairy cattle were slaughtered in federally-inspected plants during the week ending April 17 as a result of the Dairy Termination Program, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The cumulative total of cattle slaughtered under the program from April 1, 1986, through April 17, 1987, is an estimated 1,066,500 head.

SLIM SHAPE
FOR CHICKS

By limiting the feed available to six-day-old chicks for their next six days, scientists of the U.S. Department of Agriculture have produced trimmer chickens with 30 percent less abdominal fat at the marketing age of eight weeks...and they're raised on 7 percent less feed. In 1986, adding that pouch of fat to the stomach of a chicken cost produces an estimated \$350 million for feed.

SALINITY CONTROL
FOR COLORADO R.

The U.S. Department of Agriculture will implement a program to reduce the amount of salt that flows into the Colorado River from irrigated land and canals and other conduits for irrigation water. The program will continue into the first decade of the next century and is funded at \$3,804,000 in fiscal 1987. It will provide cost sharing and technical assistance to farmers, irrigation districts and canal companies to provide modern irrigation equipment and to improve or replace canals and laterals, which connect canals with on-farm irrigation systems.

NO CHANGE
IN BARBECUE

The U.S. Department of Agriculture has withdrawn a 1982 notice seeking public comments on the need to modify its regulations for barbecued meat and poultry produced under federal inspection. The USDA received 314 comments in response to the notice. However, there was no general agreement on a more acceptable method of commercial barbecuing than that required in the current regulations.

FROM OUR
TELEVISION
SERVICE

GRAIN SALES TO SOVIET UNION...The Soviet Union's agreement to purchase 4 million metric tons of U.S. wheat represents about 14 percent of American sales for the 1986-87 grain year. USDA analyst Don Novotny examines the Soviet wheat purchase. Vic Powell interviews. (186)

FOREIGN AGRICULTURAL TRADE UPDATE...USDA economist Steve MacDonald focuses on the current status of U.S. agricultural exports this year, including the impact of upcoming grain sales to the US. Vic Powell interviews. (187)

GENERIC COMMODITY CERTIFICATES...Provisions in the 1985 Farm Security Act allow the U.S. Department of Agriculture to issue generic commodity certificates to be used as payment under several programs. USDA economist Michael Hanthorn talks about their impact on both farmers and crops. DeBoria Janifer interviews. (188)

FOREIGN OWNERSHIP OF U.S. LAND...USDA attorney Peter DeBraal takes a look at the increase in foreign ownership of U.S. land, including factors that are making U.S. land attractive to foreign buyers and whether or not there is increased foreign interest in acquiring cropland. Vic Powell interviews. (189)

WORLD AGRICULTURAL OUTLOOK...Global population growth outpaced food production last year, causing per capita output to decline nearly two percent. USDA economist Cecil Davison focuses on these and other factors contributing to the current outlook for world agriculture. Vic Powell interviews. (190)



FROM OUR RADIO
SERVICE

AGRICULTURE USA #1562... (Weekly 13½ min documentary) Brenda Curtis presents a report on recent U.S. efforts to get Japan to open up its markets to more U.S. farm products.

AGRITAPE/FARM PROGRAM REPORT #1551... (Weekly reel of news features) USDA news highlights; Farmers certify wheat and barley crops; Japan/U.S. trade relations; Weed suicide?; Farm raised pigeons?

CONSUMER TIME #1044... (Weekly reel of 2½-3 min features) Putting down lime; Feeding the soil; Raisin' our exports; Nutrients and your vision; Microwave paper towels.

USDA RADIO NEWS SERVICE... Thurs, May 14, Milk production; Fri, May 15, Cattle on feed; Farm labor situation; Mon, May 18, Wheat outlook; Tues, May 19, Agriculture outlook, Crop and weather update, Catfish report; Wed, May 20, Export outlook; Thurs, May 21, Poultry production; Fri, May 22, Cotton and wool outlook, Meat production. Dial the USDA National News Line 202-488-8358 or 8359. All material changed at 5 p.m. ET each working day.

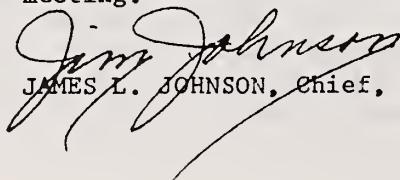
OFF MIKE

May 1 was the last program for "Farm Day," produced by Maryland Public Television. Garth Clark was the Washington correspondent for the program, covering the hill and USDA. He says PBS is exploring the possibility of bringing a "farm" program back onto the PBS schedule this fall. But for now, Garth is exploring other possibilities in the Washington area ... Jerry Reed (WIBX/NE Ag Net, Utica, NY) has an interesting project going. He's putting together a directory of agricultural information data bases and regular services of interest and value to farm broadcasters. The directory will include information about where the data bases are located and how to gain access to them. If you'd like to know more, call Jerry at 315-736-9313. Incidentally, Jerry just returned from a trip to The Netherlands with the Dairy Council of the American Dairy Assn. ... Radio station WSVA of Harrisonburg, Va. was sold, and the Farm Dept. is being discontinued, so Douglas Rubush is interested in finding a new broadcasting job. His

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address is: 476 East Washington St., Harrisonburg, Va. 22801. Phone 703/433-8078. ... Speaking of trips (as we were a moment ago), Taylor Brown (Northern Ag Network, Billings, MT), NAFB regional vice president, recently traveled to Australia and New Zealand with 18 farmers and ranchers. They spent four weeks visiting and exploring the agricultural world "down under" ... Last week we mentioned the NAFB regional meeting in Minneapolis, but we forgot to mention that Lynn Ketelsen (Linder Farm Net, Willmar, MN) is the program ramrod. This in turn now gives us the opportunity to congratulate Lynn and his wife Mary on their new daughter. Her name is LeAnn, and she's already a couple month's old. No doubt Lynn will have pictures at the meeting.


 JAMES L. JOHNSON, Chief, Radio and Television Division